

Early detection key to treating dyslexia

KUCHING: Many children with dyslexia in the state go unnoticed because there are not enough trained teachers to detect them.

State Welfare, Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah said dyslexic children often ended up being misunderstood and treated unfairly by the people around them.

"The failure to detect these children not only hampers them academically, but also stifles their emotional and mental growth.

"This is unfair to them and so, measures must be taken to ensure that such things do not happen."

Fatimah said this after closing a rope skipping competition for dyslexic children at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Science of Universiti Malaya Sarawak, here, on Saturday.

To address the situation, Fatimah said a specialised course in early detection of mental disorders among children should be included in the compulsory module for teachers in training.

Currently, the task of detecting children with disabilities rests on the shoulders of special education class teachers.

These teachers are low in number and therefore, not able to deal with the issue on the level that is required.

"Each type of mental disorder requires a different treatment and type of intervention.

"It is important that the afflicted child be given the right kind of intervention and treatment suitable to the child's unique needs."

Symptoms of dyslexia vary with the child's age.

In preschool, the child may talk louder than others, have slower learning capabilities and display poor motor skills, like having difficulty holding a pencil.

In teenagers, students may have difficulty in writing or have illegible handwriting.

Fatimah said once a child displays any symptoms, teachers should inform parents who could then take their child for a professional diagnosis.

The Sarawak Dyslexia Association has conducted workshops on the early detection of dyslexia for schools in Miri.

There are a total of 120 children registered with the association.

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Datuk Fatimah Abdullah
Sarawak Welfare,
Women and Family
Development
Minister